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ROUTING	1 OPS CTR	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

ITEM NO: 2

DATE: 15 DEC 77

SUBJECT: USSR: SOVIETS EXTEND SHCHARANSKY INVESTIGATION.4

THE KGB INVESTIGATION OF THE CASE AGAINST DISSIDENT ANATOLY SHCHARANSKY, WHO WAS ARRESTED ON MARCH 15, HAS BEEN EXTENDED FOR ANOTHER SIX MONTHS.

SOVIET PROCEDURAL LAW CALLS FOR AN INVESTIGATION LEADING EITHER TO AN INDICTMENT OR RELEASE OF THE ACCUSED WITHIN NINE MONTHS OF ARREST. EXTENSION OF INVESTIGATIONS, HOWEVER, HAVE BEEN FREQUENTLY OBTAINED BY THE KGB IN POLITICALLY SENSITIVE CASES.4

THE PROCEDURAL MOVE EVIDENTLY GIVES THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP ADDITIONAL TIME TO CHOOSE AMONG THE AVAILABLE OPTIONS IN THE CASE, AND TO ASSESS THEIR POTENTIAL IMPACT ON SOVIET-US RELATIONS. IT ALSO MEANS THAT A MAJOR DISSIDENT TRIAL HAS BEEN AVOIDED DURING THE BELGRADE CSCE REVIEW CONFERENCE, WHICH ADJOURNED FOR

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APPROVED FOR
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A MONTH'S HOLIDAY RECESS ON DECEMBER 15-16

THE SOVIETS ARE PROBABLY AWARE THAT THE EXTENSION MAY BE PUBLICLY PORTRAYED ABROAD AS MOSCOW'S GIVING IN TO WESTERN PRESSURE, AND ARE THUS LIKELY TO SUSTAIN OR EVEN INCREASE THEIR PROPAGANDA ALLEGING US INTELLIGENCE INVOLVEMENT IN SOVIET DISSIDENT AFFAIRS. THEY MAY ALSO PRIVATELY STRESS THAT THE EXTENSION OF THE INVESTIGATION IS FOR "UP TO SIX MONTHS," AND DOES NOT PRECLUDE AN EARLIER INDICTMENT AND TRIAL.

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CL BY:

CIA Operations Center

Subject USSR: SOVIETS EXTEND
 SHCHARANSKY INVESTIGATION

Date 15 DEC 77

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White House Spot Report